



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
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JAPANESE WAX SCALE (*Ceroplastes japonicus*)

Japanese wax scale (JWS) is an insect pest of ornamental plants native to Asia and Europe. It has a wide range of host plants. Primary hosts include citrus, stone fruit (*Prunus* spp.), oriental persimmon, holly, bay laurel, ivy (*Hedera helix*), and common jujube. It may also secondarily infest many other plants common to nursery trade including maple (*Acer* spp.), boxwood (*Buxus* spp.), magnolia, and willow (*Salix* spp.). It has not been found to be established in the United States but has been intercepted at ports of entry several times.

Adults are conspicuous as they are covered in a thick layer of oily wax. They range in length from 1.75-4.2 mm with a gray to pink-white color. Larvae are fixed on the surface of plants and have the form of small stars. JWS has one generation per year. Males are short lived, while mature females can overwinter.

Infestations occur on foliage, stems, and branches. JWS may cause wilting, chlorotic spotting, premature shedding of leaves, and dieback of stems. They also excrete honeydew, which can cause black sooty molds to grow on leaves and fruit. The physical feeding damage and mold can reduce the market value of plants and produce.



Figure 1. *C. japonicus* on an ornamental plant (Image courtesy of Regione del Veneto).

Visual inspection is used to monitor the presence of JWS. The contrast in color between JWS and stems is easily seen, along with black sooty mold. However, microscopic examination must be used to authoritatively identify the species. It may be confused with other *Ceroplastes* species present in the United States. Early detection is key to controlling the potential damage and spread of this pest. If seen, it should be reported to the state plant health director or regulatory official.

Source: CAPS Pest Datasheet, CABI Datasheet